
Best practice in teaching and learning in the creative arts at key stage 2

May 2015

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Introduction

This report is written in response to a request for advice from the Welsh Government in the Minister's annual remit letter to Estyn for 2013-2014. The report examines standards and provision for the creative arts at key stage 2 in schools where good practice had previously been identified.

The report is intended for the Welsh Government, headteachers and staff in schools, local authorities and regional consortia. It may also be of interest to those working with faith schools through diocesan authorities, teacher trainers and those working in arts and cultural heritage organisations.

The section of the report on standards of achievement does not present a national picture since the sample of schools visited as part of the survey is small and focuses on schools with strong provision for various aspects of the creative arts.

The report takes account of the responses to an electronic survey, commissioned by Estyn in autumn 2014, in which a random sample of schools across Wales were asked about their provision, leadership and management for the creative arts. Where appropriate, the report also includes evidence from inspection findings.

The report includes case studies of best practice for other schools to consider. These are intended to stimulate discussions within and between schools to promote best practice in teaching and learning across Wales.

For the purposes of this report, the term 'creative arts' includes art and design, dance, drama and music.

Background

Art and design and music are compulsory foundation subjects within the National Curriculum for Wales at key stage 2. Dance is an integral part of the curriculum in physical education (PE), and drama is an element within the curriculum for English and Welsh. In addition, schools are required under the Education Act 2002 to provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum that promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils.

Schools' provision for the creative arts sits within the broader educational context in Wales which includes the Welsh Government's priorities for:

- improving standards of literacy and numeracy
- reducing the impact of poverty on educational attainment
- implementing a plan for arts and creative learning in Wales

Professor Dai Smith produced a report for the Welsh Government on 'Arts in Education in the Schools of Wales' in September 2013. The headlines from the report are given below:

- In Wales, there is some undeniably excellent, but patchy, arts education

happening in our schools

- This work often stems from exceptional leadership
- The work should be championed, understood and shared
- At secondary level, there are too often constraints on creative, arts-orientated work across the curriculum, which are not so evident in primary schools

Professor Smith argues that all students should be presented with ‘a plethora of arts experiences... in order to make every school in Wales an arts-rich school in either achievement or ambition’, and he made 12 recommendations to integrate the arts and creativity more effectively into education. The recommendations were all accepted by Welsh Government in March 2014.

In March 2015 the Welsh Government launched the Arts and Creative Learning Plan for Wales. This plan is designed to ‘bring about a step change in the range and quality of opportunities that children and young people in Wales are given to engage with and learn about the arts and their culture’. It will be achieved through partnership work with the Arts Council of Wales. Further details of the Arts and Creative Learning Plan can be found on the Welsh government website¹. In addition, further examples of best practice case studies of partnership working can be found on the Learning Wales website.²

In 2006, Estyn published an evaluation of the Music Development Fund in Wales (Estyn 2006). This identified increases in the number of pupils taking music tuition as a result of the fund, the standards that they achieve and the take-up of music for public examinations. The fund has now ceased and music services are funded via the revenue support grant to local authorities.

¹ <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/creative-learning-through-the-arts/?lang=en>

² <http://learning.wales.gov.uk/news/sitenews/arts-in-education-case-studies/?lang=en>

Main findings

Standards in the creative arts

- 1 In most of the best practice schools visited, standards are at least good in two or more of the creative art forms (art and design, dance, drama and music). In a minority of these schools, standards in one or other of the creative art forms are well above those expected. However, it is rare for standards to be high in all four creative arts in any one school.
- 2 Pupils' standards of wellbeing in nearly all of the best practice schools visited are good or excellent. Pupils and staff in these schools say that the creative arts have a very positive impact on improving pupils' wellbeing.
- 3 Many schools have good evidence of the impact of the creative arts in improving pupils' standards in oracy. This is partly because worthwhile engagement in the creative arts gives pupils exciting experiences to talk about. The arts often provide a stimulating context for pupils to use and to develop their literacy skills, but there is not enough evidence to show that the arts directly improve pupils' performance in reading and writing.

Provision for the creative arts

- 4 Overall, the quality of the curriculum for the creative arts relies too much on chance rather than on secure curriculum planning. In most schools, the provision for the creative arts depends too much on whether there is an enthusiastic teacher on the staff with specialist skills and knowledge. While this often secures high standards in one area of the creative arts, it often does not secure high standards in all.
- 5 Pupils' standards are best when their teachers are knowledgeable and confident creative artists, as well as good classroom practitioners. Many teachers who are not specialists lack the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver the creative arts to the highest level, especially by Year 6. There is too little training and support available to help teachers develop their teaching in the creative arts.
- 6 In many of the schools visited, planning for the creative arts takes good account of what pupils can already do to ensure that pupils develop their skills progressively. In a few of the schools visited, although teachers' planning generally provides an appropriate breadth of experiences across the creative arts, the experiences do not build on pupils' existing skills well enough. As a result, pupils complete activities that are undemanding and lack challenge.
- 7 In the most successful lessons, teachers have a thorough and comprehensive subject knowledge which they use to set high expectations of pupils. They teach with energy, pace and enthusiasm, knowing when it is appropriate to intervene or to challenge and are not afraid to allow time for pupils to consolidate their learning. Teachers encourage pupils to make their own decisions and to take risks, so that sometimes they learn from their mistakes. They use a wide range of well-chosen resources, including information and communication technology (ICT). Where

teaching is less successful, planned activities do not challenge pupils well enough, especially the more able. Often in these weaker lessons, teachers direct and constrain the learning too much and pupils are afraid to experiment for fear of getting things wrong.

Leadership and the creative arts

- 8 In the best practice schools visited, senior leaders share a passion and vision for the creative arts. They believe that the creative arts inspire, stimulate and motivate pupils to think imaginatively, to persevere and to respond positively to challenges. In these schools, leaders find imaginative ways to maintain a high profile for the creative arts, despite the limitations of the national curriculum and pressures on financial resources. In nearly all of the schools visited, leaders identify that it is possible to teach the creative arts well within the primary curriculum. However, in around half of the schools surveyed, leaders have recently reduced the time assigned to the creative arts. In many cases, this is because they believe that devoting resources to the arts detracts from improving measureable outcomes in literacy and numeracy.
- 9 In many of the schools, subject leaders provide comprehensive plans to support colleagues to deliver lessons in the creative arts. These schemes of work often pay good attention to a breadth of engaging creative experiences, but in the weaker examples the schemes pay too little attention to the progressive development of pupils' skills. In particular, many schemes of work do not refer to the materials which exemplify the expected standards in the creative arts. Subject leaders for the creative arts often monitor the provision within their subjects carefully and produce annual reports for governors and senior leaders. While monitoring reports and evaluates pupil engagement and participation, too often it does not evaluate the standards that pupils achieve or say how they could be improved.
- 10 A very few of the schools visited share best practice in the creative arts and pool resources. Often these schools provide model lessons for others to observe, and they host or deliver training sessions for colleagues from their own and other schools. However, too many schools work in isolation and do not benefit from working with other schools.
- 11 Nearly all of the schools visited or surveyed offer instrumental music lessons, although in a quarter of the schools only a very few pupils take up the lessons. Around half of the schools visited do not charge pupils for instrumental lessons, but in a very few schools all pupils are expected to pay the full cost of instrumental tuition. In these schools pupils from poorer families do not choose to learn to play a musical instrument, because the cost is prohibitive.
- 12 Visits to heritage sites and theatres have a very significant impact on pupils' learning. In the most effective practice, teachers plan and prepare carefully for the visits so the pupils get the most from the experience and they follow up pupils' learning quickly once back at school. Nearly all schools surveyed take pupils on trips and visits, or receive visitors in school, related to the creative arts. In most of the best practice schools, leaders ensure that all pupils, including those from poorer families, take part in trips and visits by reducing or waiving costs. However, responses from schools participating in the survey show that this is not always the case.

Recommendations

In order to improve provision and to raise standards in the creative arts:

Schools should:

- R1 Plan a sequence of learning opportunities for pupils to experience the breadth of the creative arts and develop their creative skills as they move through school
- R2 Support teachers to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to teach the creative arts well
- R3 Monitor pupils' achievements in the creative arts
- R4 Work more closely with other schools to share best practice and resources in the creative arts

Local authorities and the regional consortia should:

- R5 Offer opportunities for teachers to develop their skills and confidence in teaching one or more creative arts subjects
- R6 Provide training for schools to help them to identify, develop and share best practice in teaching and assessment in the creative arts

The Welsh Government should:

- R7 Continue to support schools to make use of dedicated funding to enable pupils from poorer families to learn to play musical instruments and to take a full part in the creative arts
- R8 Publicise materials that exemplify the expected standards in the creative arts³

³ <http://learning.wales.gov.uk/docs/learningwales/publications/130508-english-guidance-en.pdf>
<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/docs/learningwales/publications/130424-art-and-design-guidance-en.pdf>
<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/docs/learningwales/publications/130425-physical-education-guidance-en.pdf>
<http://learning.wales.gov.uk/docs/learningwales/publications/130424-music-guidance-en.pdf>

Standards observed in best practice schools

Standards in the creative arts

- 13 Standards in art and design, dance, drama and music in many of the schools visited for the report are at or above those expected for the pupils' age. The standards are generally better than expected in one or two of the arts subjects in each school, normally as a result of the expertise and confidence of a particular member of staff. However, it is rare for standards to be high in all four creative arts in any one school.

Art and design

- 14 In art and design, standards are highest where pupils apply their growing knowledge and mastery of techniques progressively and effectively. In many schools visited, pupils enjoy working confidently with a wide variety of tools, materials and techniques. As a result, a majority achieve standards above those usually found for their age. They often make good use of a range of media and stylistic approaches to communicate their ideas and feelings imaginatively and creatively. In a majority of schools visited, by Year 6, pupils make careful observational drawings with pencil and charcoal, achieving different effects through shading, smudging and hatching. They experiment with different visual and tactile properties, for example creating lines and patterns of differing tones, textures and thicknesses. They develop and refine their skills in using media, for instance to find out how adding water to paint creates different effects when painting a river. In some of the best practice seen, pupils design and make both two-dimensional images and three-dimensional forms. They work effectively on fabrics using printing and batik. They experiment confidently and resourcefully with clay and other modelling materials, for example using papier mâché skilfully to make models, masks and mosaics and develop their craft skills to a good standard.
- 15 In many of the schools visited, pupils use first-hand experiences as a stimulus for their art. They work from observation, but they also attempt to capture multi-sensory experiences such as a visit to a local heritage site. They make notes, take photographs and make on-the-spot drawings to record their experiences. In one school visited, pupils' art work reflects the influence of studies of different ethnic and community cultures, including Indian Rangoli folk art, Mehndi ink designs and African Ndebele patterns. Pupils achieve good standards because they plan their research well and study plentiful examples of the art form before attempting their own designs. In most schools visited, pupils' art work is displayed widely in school foyers, corridors and shared areas. This work often derives from class topics and large-scale projects which benefit from trips, theme weeks or artist residencies. The prominence and quality of the art work on display serves to create a stimulating ethos within the school, and both sets and reflects high standards in artistic work.
- 16 In a few of the schools visited, pupils' art work relies too heavily on copying reproductions of artists' work. These pupils are often able to speak knowledgeably about the methods and purposes they have studied, but too often they are not able to use and apply the techniques they have learnt imaginatively in their own work. The quality of pupils' art work often suffers when they receive insufficient time in their art

lessons to create, rather than merely copy, works of art. On occasions, the quality of work declines when pupils do not have enough opportunity to make decisions for themselves. In these cases, they often rely too heavily on the teacher throughout the creative process, or the teacher focuses too heavily on encouraging pupils to perfect techniques rather than to work creatively.

Dance

- 17 In dance, in a majority of the schools visited, many pupils perform with confidence and obvious enjoyment, controlling their body movements and postures well. They work collaboratively in lessons to plan and devise well-structured independent performances based on a class stimulus. By Year 6, many pupils have developed the ability to compose and perform short dance sequences which make good use of visual techniques, for example body positioning and facial expressions. Most respond appropriately and sensitively to different genres of music, using well-controlled physical movements.
- 18 In a few schools, standards in dance are less well developed than in the other creative arts. In these schools, most pupils use simple movement patterns effectively to devise, evaluate and refine movement sequences. However, the provision is too limited to enable pupils to develop and refine these patterns across a wide range of dance genres and techniques.

Drama

Pupils' standards in drama are good in all of the schools visited, and excellent in a few. During the lessons observed, most pupils make good and often rapid progress in developing their oracy skills. This is particularly marked for pupils who start with limited levels of speech and language, who often make rapid progress to catch up with their peers. Many pupils make good progress in acquiring a wide vocabulary, using poise and posture, and they develop self-confidence and vocal control when speaking in front of an audience. Where teachers are skilled, pupils also develop high standards in a wide range of dramatic techniques, such as clowning, improvisation, mime, character work and dialect study. Many of the schools visited or surveyed report the specific benefits of drama over and above other creative arts subjects, particularly in improving pupils' outcomes in oracy.

Music

- 19 In many of the schools visited, standards in singing are well above the levels expected for the pupils' age. In these schools, by Year 6 and often earlier, nearly all pupils sing a wide repertoire of songs fluently, in tune, and with good attention to breathing and phrasing. When singing in harmony, most pupils hold a part that they have learnt confidently and accurately. A majority listen and respond sensitively to changes in the singing of other pupils, for example in dynamics or shifts of pitch. In Welsh-medium schools, a minority of pupils have exceptionally well-developed performance skills in particular singing forms, such as 'Cerdd Dant'⁴.

⁴ See glossary

- 20 In a few schools, there is a notable difference in standards of music performance between groups of pupils. Those who receive additional small group tuition or coaching in singing and instrumental work often achieve excellent standards. Frequently, parents pay a charge for the additional tuition. More often, the tuition is targeted exclusively at identified pupils who may have a gift or talent for music. On occasions, these individuals achieve exceptional standards in instrumental performance, normally as a result of lessons provided by peripatetic music teachers. However, those who only receive their basic curriculum entitlement often achieve the expected standards for their age.
- 21 In other aspects of music, standards observed in many of the best practice schools are good. In these schools, most pupils compose short, well-structured pieces for classroom ensembles that they perform, record and evaluate effectively. They perform their compositions sensitively and with control using a suitable range of classroom and orchestral instruments. By Year 6, most pupils have a good understanding of simple musical form and structure. Across the schools visited, many pupils use an appropriate level of technical vocabulary to appraise music they have written or heard. Most pupils use their knowledge effectively to compare and make personal judgements about a variety of genres of music.

The impact on standards and wellbeing in other areas of the curriculum

- 22 In most of the schools visited, pupils' standards of oracy are as good as or better than those usually found for their age. In part, this is because their engagement in the creative arts gives pupils a wealth of rich experiences to talk about. Nearly all pupils speak with conviction about their feelings about different art forms. In many schools, pupils are able to articulate clearly the impact of the creative arts on improving their own wellbeing, using well-chosen, mature vocabulary and thoughtful, evaluative sentences.

How joining the school Big Band improves pupils' oracy skills

Context

Milford Haven Junior School in Pembrokeshire is an English-medium school for pupils aged seven to 11. There are 347 pupils on roll. Approximately 29% are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. Around 31% have additional learning needs, which is above the national average.

Strategy

The school's leaders believe that pupils benefit from learning a musical instrument. Leaders have identified that pupils who learn instruments have improved their self-esteem, behaviour, self-confidence and oracy skills. The school allocates significant funding from its budget so that all pupils can be invited to learn a musical instrument free of charge. As part of their learning, these pupils are expected to join the school Big Band which meets weekly after school. There are currently around 80 players in the band.

Action

Milford Haven Junior School Big Band reached the finals of the annual Music for Youth competition in 2013. As a result, they travelled from Pembrokeshire to Birmingham, to perform at the Birmingham Symphony Hall.

Outcomes

Member of the Big Band speak with great pride and passion about their performance. Although over a year ago, they clearly value both the barriers and successes they experienced in raising funds for the trip to Birmingham, for both the performers and their families. They describe their feelings of anticipation and excitement before, during and after the event, using well-constructed, extended sentences and a wide range of vocabulary. They communicate very effectively their excitement at the audience's enthusiastic participation in joining in the band's rendition of a Tom Jones medley. Finally, they consider maturely why the band needs to rehearse regularly, and the impact of their personal music practice and lessons on the band's performance.

- 23 Where pupils achieve high standards in art, they investigate the work of artists to understand how and why they produce their work. In the best cases, pupils develop their oracy and writing skills very effectively when describing art, and by the time they are in Year 6, a majority of pupils use a wide vocabulary in their well-reasoned personal responses to works of art. Pupils can identify the formal elements of art (such as line, colour and tone) that artists use and can talk about the meaning of the artwork. They use the information that they discover from talking and writing about the work of artists to develop their own work, for example, by investigating various artists' paintings of rivers when creating their own work about the Taff Trail.
- 24 Most pupils in the best practice schools speak passionately about the enjoyment they derive from their involvement in rehearsals and after-school clubs, especially when building up to a performance or exhibition. Almost all pupils describe the positive impact of performing (through dance, drama and music) in front of an audience. Although many say that they are nervous before a performance, most say that their nerves disappear as they begin to enjoy taking part and become the centre of attention. Without exception, these pupils say that they want to perform over and over again. Almost all pupils identify that the experience helps them to feel confident in other aspects of school life, for example when presenting to their class-mates or contributing to a debate or discussion. However, in one school, leaders observe that a very few pupils find the creative arts 'a bit of an ordeal' and do not enjoy performing in front of people.

Using school radio to develop pupils' oracy skills

Context

Ysgol-Y-Wern is a Welsh-medium primary school in Cardiff. There are 500 pupils on roll. About 5% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, and around 16% have additional learning needs. These proportions are below the national average.

Strategy

This modern and well-equipped school has a purpose-built recording studio. Leaders plan work to develop pupils' independence skills and provide meaningful opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their literacy skills. The radio station provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their self-confidence and their oracy skills.

Action

Pupils in Year 6 are responsible for generating a 10-minute radio programme that is broadcast every Friday afternoon to the whole school. Different pupils spend their lunchtimes scripting, researching, interviewing and pre-recording the radio programme. Every radio programme is uploaded to the school web site and is available for parents to download. Pupils receive training through a partnership with a local radio station. Following a one-day training visit to the radio station in the autumn term, the pupils are then allowed to develop their own programmes throughout the year. The school has its own recording studio. During the summer term, Year 6 pupils teach their peers in Year 5 how to operate the equipment.

Outcomes

This activity gives all pupils the opportunity to perform and to develop their literacy and oracy skills within a worthwhile context. It gives them an insight into a real-life scenario that uses their creative skills alongside current technologies. All pupils use and apply their literacy skills effectively within the context of this work. They work co-operatively and independently of their teachers during lunch times. They strive to make their productions professional and to achieve a very high standard.

- 25 In all of the schools visited, pupils' enjoyment and engagement in the creative arts are clear, and standards of wellbeing are good or better. Many pupils clearly enjoy performing to an audience, either of peers, parents or the wider community. Often, this is also the case for pupils who find traditional academic subjects difficult. These pupils say that they often feel a sense of achievement and satisfaction in their work in the creative arts that they find lacking in other subjects. They enjoy working hard to achieve good standards in the creative arts. They develop personal satisfaction through their ability to persevere, which enriches the quality of their lives.
- 26 In a few of the schools visited, leaders have evidence through their pastoral assessment data that pupils' participation in the creative arts has raised the confidence and self-esteem of pupils. In many schools, particularly those where leaders actively show their support for the creative arts, pupils' work in other subjects benefits from the creativity, imagination and engagement that pupils have developed in creative arts lessons. Specific arts projects, for example through dance and drama, help pupils to gain a deeper understanding of diversity and respect for individual differences. The strong life skills that pupils have developed in terms of planning and managing their time in order to complete long-term art projects or to be well prepared for a musical or dramatic performance often support high levels of self-direction and self-confidence in other subjects. In many best practice schools visited, pupils in general behave well. They co-operate well with others and develop high

levels of self-esteem and self-confidence. However, there is insufficient evidence to link these good personal and social outcomes at a whole-school level directly to pupils' strong participation in the creative arts. Nevertheless, it is clear that standards of wellbeing are often good in schools where teachers and leaders nurture all aspects of their pupils' development effectively, including through well-focused provision for the creative arts.

- 27 In a very few schools, leaders have identified the impact of creative arts projects on improving attendance for targeted groups of pupils. These leaders attribute the improvements to pupils' engagement with school activities, such as the creative arts. Many pupils identify that they attend school more regularly when they are working towards a performance, production or exhibition.

How taking part in dramatic productions can improve pupils' attendance

Context

Fenton Primary School is an English-medium primary school in Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, with 427 pupils on roll. About 39% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. About 30% of pupils have additional learning needs. This is above the national average. Over the past four years, pupils' attendance is consistently above the median when compared to similar schools.

Strategy

The school has identified that the creative arts have a positive impact on pupils' wellbeing and broadens their horizons, particularly for those pupils from poorer families. The school has established a successful choir and orchestra. Leaders seek out ways to broaden pupils' opportunities to become involved in the arts.

Actions

The school are taking part for the first time in an annual national Shakespeare festival for schools. Leaders have identified a teacher and teaching assistants to lead the project. They receive training from a national organisation. Year 5 pupils are involved in rehearsing and performing scenes from *The Tempest*. Teachers and teaching assistants deliver well-focused rehearsals during and after the school day.

Outcomes

Nearly all pupils work hard to make good, and in some cases excellent, progress especially with their oracy skills. Many of the pupils involved in the festival have improved their attendance significantly, and none has worse attendance, when compared with the previous term. Pupils say that this is because they want to be present for the rehearsals and are looking forward to the performance on stage.

Provision

Curriculum provision and organisation

- 28 Most of the best practice schools allocate between a day and two days a week to creative arts activities. They normally spread this time over the week. This provides an appropriate amount of time to cover the requirements for the creative arts in sufficient depth. In many schools, the allocation of time for the creative arts changes through the school year, often depending on whether there is a forthcoming performance. In a few schools, aspects of the creative arts are taught in condensed blocks of time, for example, devoting every afternoon for a week exclusively to an art and design project. This makes efficient use of the limited time available. However, in the random sample involved in the survey questionnaire, most schools devote less than a day per week to the creative arts.
- 29 The creative arts are taught as separate, individual, timetabled subjects in many of the schools visited or responding to the survey. All of the schools timetable music specifically, and by Year 6, music is taught by a teacher with specialist skills and knowledge in half of the schools. A few schools use a specialist teacher for art and design and dance, mainly in Years 5 and 6. For other creative arts, such as drama and creative writing, in most schools the class teacher delivers the lessons to their pupils, whether or not the teacher is a specialist.
- 30 Schools make various arrangements to deliver the creative arts. These may include teachers exchanging classes for particular subjects, or using the skills of part-time teachers during class teachers' planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time. A few schools engage specialist agencies to deliver all or part of the creative arts curriculum, especially for music and dance. In the best examples, these arrangements make good use of the available teacher expertise to ensure that all pupils have their full entitlement to all of the creative arts. However, this is not always the case. For example, in most schools, all pupils experience dance regularly, as part of the curriculum for physical education. In a very few schools, a specialist teacher delivers dance, exclusively as an after-school club, for only those who choose to take part.
- 31 The different creative arts receive variable priority in the curriculum depending on staff expertise, and this often accounts for pupils' varying standards. For example, in schools where a confident, talented musician leads the creative arts, pupils often achieve higher standards in music than in dance, drama or art and design, and they spend longer in music lessons of good quality. The school may be well respected in the locality for its music provision and, as a result, take part in many local showcase opportunities. In other schools, where an art and design specialist leads the creative arts, art and design receives more curriculum prominence and, as a result, pupils achieve higher standards and wider opportunities in art. Even in the largest primary schools visited (in excess of 600 pupils with a total of 60 staff), hardly any pupils achieve better-than-expected standards across all four of the art forms.
- 32 Overall, the provision for the creative arts in schools depends too much on whether there is a teacher on the staff with specialist skills, knowledge and enthusiasm for a

creative art. While this often secures high standards in one area of the creative arts, it often does not secure high standards in all. The curriculum for the creative arts relies too much on chance and not enough on secure curriculum planning that ensures that all pupils receive a broad experience of the creative arts.

- 33 Most of the schools visited and surveyed use a thematic curriculum to some degree. This is where subjects are grouped together in topics so that pupils can make links between their learning. Although different subjects may be timetabled separately, there is a theme running through pupils' learning over a period of time, such as The Second World War or Wonderful Wales. Teachers provide worthwhile planned opportunities for pupils to enrich their understanding of the theme through dance, drama, music and art. However, on occasions, this breadth of experience is at the expense of developing pupils' skills progressively in the creative arts subjects. As a result, although pupils experience a suitable range of art forms to enhance their understanding of the theme, the work that they complete in their creative arts lesson is often not challenging enough, particularly for more able pupils.

Using the haka as part of a topic which helps pupils to make links in their learning

Context

Pillgwenlly Primary School is a large inner city school of 681 pupils serving a multi-ethnic population in Newport. Around 41% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, and approximately 40% of pupils have additional learning needs. These proportions are much higher than the national average.

Strategy

The school's leaders promote the arts as a means of celebrating cultural and linguistic diversity within the school and wider community. Teachers' thorough planning for the arts ensures that all pupils have a wide and progressive experience. Leaders also take good account of different groups of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable to under-achievement. In particular these include pupils with limited or, in the case of new arrivals to the country, no English, who are immediately included in the practical activities and can participate on an equal footing with their peers. Additionally, leaders consider that the arts help more withdrawn pupils with social or emotional difficulties to grow in confidence, as a result of participating and working collaboratively in groups.

Action

Year 6 pupils study the topic of 'Islands', which involves reading about myths and inventing their own heroes. The class watch a recording of the haka battle dance performed by the New Zealand rugby team and discuss the cultural importance of this ritual. They analyse different features of the performance including the important role of body positioning, movement, sound and facial expression in order to plan their own battle dance sequences.

After a lively warm-up session, pupils work in groups of four or five to plan and rehearse their own battle dances. Within the session, pupils have the opportunity to perform their work and to receive feedback from their peers as well as from the teacher. They then have an opportunity to try out fresh ideas and to incorporate the suggested improvements into their subsequent attempts.

Outcomes

All pupils participate enthusiastically in this lesson. They apply themselves with confidence, discipline, energy and enthusiasm. They have a clear idea of what they are trying to create and discuss a range of features and success criteria that would make their dances effective. Throughout the lesson the teacher takes opportunities to draw out appropriate words and phrases from the pupils to describe movements and gestures. As a result, the lesson makes an excellent contribution to pupils' oral language development, including the significant proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Pupils show good ability to work as teams and discuss, exchange ideas, negotiate and plan collaboratively. They show growing confidence and inventiveness in rehearsal and make good progress by the final performances at the end of the lesson.

- 34 Nearly all of the schools visited show that it is possible to teach the creative arts well within the primary curriculum. They can teach literacy and numeracy effectively, as well as providing rich experiences in the creative arts. In these schools, teachers plan imaginatively and create innovative, challenging opportunities for pupils to use and apply their developing repertoire of skills, across subject boundaries. However, in half of the schools surveyed the amount of time devoted to the creative arts has declined recently, although in half there has been no change. A minority of schools claim that the recently-introduced National Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) has limited the time and resources available for the creative arts. They consider that there is too strong a focus on the written aspects of literacy and numeracy, and, as a result, they find it hard to justify time for the creative arts. These schools do not fully appreciate the wider role of the creative arts in developing pupils' wellbeing and confidence, which in turn supports the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

Giant Winter

Context

Milford Haven Junior School in Pembrokeshire is an English-medium school for pupils aged seven to 11. There are 347 pupils on roll. Approximately 29% are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. Around 31% have additional learning needs, which is above the national average.

Strategy

Music is pivotal to the curriculum and a whole-school priority. It underpins other lessons and is not a 'bolt-on' feature of the provision. Music is used across all curriculum topics. It enables pupils to make links in their learning. The school believes that barriers pupils may have in literacy can be overcome through music. For example, pupils understand and illustrate the language of poetry through their musical compositions.

Action

Year 6 pupils study the poem 'Giant Winter' by John Foster as part of their literacy lessons. In music, they listen to a range of music about winter. The teacher focuses their listening well by giving the pupils captions and titles which they match to the compositions they hear. Pupils justify their answers in discussion by referring to their listening.

Pupils then create their own musical compositions to follow the structure of the poem they have studied. Pupils represent the poetic imagery using instruments, for example drumbeats to depict the battle between winter and spring, glissandi on glockenspiels and xylophones for 'shivering trees' and 'ripples cold muscles of iron', screeching strings for 'gripping talons of ice' and a cowbell clock to portray how 'he watches and waits til it's time to renew the battle again'. Pupils use appropriate technical language to describe the musical elements that they use, for instance, crescendo and decrescendo to describe their varying dynamics, accelerando and rallentando to identify changing tempo, and legato or staccato to articulate musical phrases.

Finally, all pupils listen respectfully as their peers perform their compositions. They listen attentively because they know the poem that the music represents well. They offer each other constructive criticism and well-earned praise, and 'borrow' good ideas that they hear to improve their own work.

Outcomes

Pupils' positive attitudes to music enable them to visualise and access some difficult poetic imagery and so improve their understanding of the poem. The teacher identifies individuals who struggle to succeed in literacy but shine in music, and helps these pupils to make the link in their learning in subsequent literacy lessons. The school identifies that music supports pupils' listening, thinking and decision-making skills, and develops their ability to work as a member of a team.

In addition, leaders target pupils from deprived backgrounds and support them to access instrumental tuition, for example providing an instrument using the school's pupil deprivation grant, and providing early opportunities for them to perform through the school's band.

- 35 Many schools visited make very good use of ICT to enhance pupils' learning in the creative arts. They provide opportunities for pupils to practise their ICT skills effectively, using a good range of programmes and applications. In many schools, pupils use portable tablet devices efficiently to record their work in the creative arts. Adults support pupils well to review, evaluate and improve their performances, for example in dance and drama. In music lessons, many pupils compose using popular applications. When used well, these applications provide a platform for many pupils to produce a wide variety of professional-sounding compositions, which sustain and develop musical ideas effectively. In many art and design lessons, pupils research artists' works quickly and efficiently using tablet computers. When teachers direct this work well, it is extremely powerful in enabling pupils to assimilate many examples of a particular style in a short time. In a few schools, pupils use video editing applications effectively to share their work with their peers and parents.

Making a film to provide a context to develop pupils' literacy skills

Context

Rumney Primary School is an English-medium primary school in Cardiff with 483 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 16%, which is below the national average. The proportion of pupils identified with additional learning needs is 26%, which is around the national average.

Strategy

Teachers at Rumney Primary School are proud of the school's longstanding tradition in the creative arts. They actively seek out ways for pupils to use their creative skills, for example using film and digital learning, alongside the literacy and numeracy framework.

Action

Pupils in Year 6 create their own action films. Working in groups, they write, edit, learn and rehearse the playscript. They cast and direct the film. They edit their performances using hand-held tablet computers and media applications. They write the music to accompany parts of the film and create advertising posters, slogans and straplines. They evaluate each other's work and present the finished films to an audience of parents and friends at an open afternoon. The teacher devises additional individual challenges to ensure that pupils build on their literacy skills progressively.

Outcomes

Pupils are excited and engaged by the project. They have a common purpose and incentive to achieve high standards in many subject areas. For example, they make good use of their ICT, music and art skills to create an integrated, multi-media end product to celebrate. Nearly all pupils make good progress in their oracy. Almost all pupils say that they enjoy writing collaboratively, and most pupils' standards in writing are at or above the expected level. The very few pupils who have standards below those expected are supported well, by a skilled teaching assistant. As a result, nearly all pupils develop perseverance in writing a longer piece of work.

- 36 A majority of schools visited find imaginative opportunities to engage pupils in the creative arts while providing a motivating and purposeful context for pupils to develop their enterprise, business and numeracy skills. Often these activities involve creating and making goods for sale, for example at a Christmas fair, charity event or in partnership with a local business. In addition to designing and making the goods, pupils work out the cost of the materials and consider profit and loss when negotiating a final price for the product.

Encouraging pupils to be creative entrepreneurs

Context

Ynystawe Primary School near Swansea is an English-medium school with 202 pupils on roll. About 8% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having additional learning needs is in line with the national average.

Strategy

Much of the school's work emanates from their involvement in a project, called 'The Leonardo Effect'. This stems from work undertaken with St Mary's College in Ireland. The aim of the project is to link learning about art and science⁵. Teachers make excellent use of the local area as a resource to develop the creative arts, for example drawing on the local history of copper mining. The school has created its own museum which it uses well to support thematic teaching. Leaders routinely share their expertise and innovative approaches to curriculum management, particularly in relation to the creative arts, within the cluster, the local authority and further afield.

Action

Most pupils participate in after-school or in-school clubs which combine a variety of aspects of creativity and innovation. These are run voluntarily by teachers, and supported by additional adults from the school community. For example, members of the school's enterprise group recently designed and made clay plates, which have been sold in the National Waterfront Museum, local craft shops and in school. Pupils' work has recently been exhibited in the National Gallery in London and in the National Waterfront Museum in Swansea.

Outcomes

The development of enterprise projects has enabled pupils to build their collaborative and organisational skills to a high level and this has had a positive impact on creating good levels of self-esteem and confidence. Pupils' involvement in many whole-school creative activities has a positive impact on standards attained in the creative arts and has created a whole-school ethos of working together towards a common goal. Leaders' approach to the curriculum has had a significant impact on improved achievement in the creative arts, especially in art.

- 37 Many schools visited use the creative arts very effectively to include pupils with additional learning needs, for example by including pupils from learning resource classes. They ensure that these pupils have appropriate opportunities to participate in arts activities with their peers in mainstream classes. In a few schools, pupils who are unable to sing conventionally join the choir by signing⁶, and this mode of communication is copied by other pupils. A few schools also make good use of signing to support whole-school singing activities. In many schools, teachers find

⁵ 'Further information on the school's work on 'The Leonardo Effect' is available on its website: https://swansea-edunet.gov.uk/en/schools/ynystawe/Pages/The_Leonardo_Effect.aspx

⁶ Using sign language to communicate the words of a song, in time to the music

imaginative and ingenious ways to include pupils with disabilities in dance lessons. This level of inclusion creates a school culture of tolerance, an understanding of individuals' differences and a sense of corporate identity. It also often provides valuable opportunities for all pupils to experience the spiritual dimension of the creative arts, through making a small individual contribution to a much greater and tangibly successful whole.

Sing and be happy

Context

Tywyn Primary School in Sandfields in Neath Port Talbot is an English-medium school with 460 pupils on roll. About 31% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having additional learning needs is 49%, which is well above the national average.

Strategy

Leaders within the school believe in the power of community singing. All children take part in the weekly whole-school singing sessions. Leaders take great care to include all members of the school community. For example, a few pupils who attend the specialist teaching facility sign rather than sing. Leaders believe that singing is a valuable, inexpensive resource which has a very positive impact on all pupils' wellbeing.

Action

The weekly sessions are led by the deputy headteacher, who is a confident musician. Older pupils operate the technology to provide words, microphones and backing tracks, and lead part-singing and rounds. Pupils sing and enjoy a wide repertoire of songs, including Welsh folk songs, nonsense songs, contemporary ballads and popular music, rounds, and traditional songs. The leader ensures that the tessitura⁷ of the repertoire is well matched to children's voices, and the songs are not too wordy for younger pupils to read or remember. Where appropriate, all pupils learn to sign and sing the words.

Outcomes

Pupil surveys identify that singing makes a valuable contribution to pupils' happiness and enjoyment of school. Leaders identify that the whole-school sessions improve pupils' behaviour, concentration, listening skills and co-operation, and that this positive impact continues in the classrooms after the singing sessions. All pupils take part. As a result, singing makes a valuable contribution to promoting a whole-school, inclusive ethos. All pupils hear and respond to technical musical vocabulary, for example to describe tempi and dynamics. Older pupils develop their leadership skills in conducting singing and leading parts. Individual pupils sing solo parts in front of the school and this develops their self-esteem and confidence very well.

⁷ The general range within which most notes of a vocal part fall, as opposed to the musical compass or range which may include occasional higher or lower notes.

- 38 A few schools visited make good use of music therapy sessions with pupils who have social, emotional or behavioural needs, or who are in danger of becoming disaffected with school. These small group sessions are normally targeted at pupils who may be disengaged or have concentration or communication difficulties. They are usually led by specially trained musicians, who often have teaching experience working with pupils who have additional needs. In the best examples, schools visited have clear and measurable evidence of the positive impact of music therapy sessions, for example on improving engagement and attendance, although in a minority of schools, leaders have not collected or analysed data to show the full impact of their work. Pupils say that they enjoy the sessions very much and feel more confident in their other lessons as a result.

Music therapy supports behavioural and emotional wellbeing

Context

Christchurch (C.I.W.) Voluntary Aided Primary School is an English-medium primary school in Swansea, with 136 pupils on roll. About 14% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. The proportion of pupils identified with additional learning needs is around 30%, which is above the national average.

Strategy

Pupils with emotional or behavioural problems are given the opportunity to take part in music therapy. Children are encouraged to explore their feelings through music and learn strategies for managing their own behaviour.

Action

A part time music therapist/ teacher works regularly with a group of vulnerable pupils who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties or pupils who have recently come to the country and have low levels of language acquisition. The therapy aims to enable pupils to deal with their difficulties and give them increased confidence and improved self-esteem, which in turn impacts on attainment and levels of engagement. The pupils observed used handbells to work towards a group performance for a Christmas concert.

Outcomes

All of the pupils clearly enjoy the group and engage well with the teacher. Nearly all pupils could follow the graphic notation unaided, keep in time and play the correct rhythm. They knew not to play during the rests. All of the pupils were confident performers. Around half were able to self-correct if they made a mistake. One pupil was able to direct the others unaided and to read ahead in the score.

Pupils' standards in wellbeing were above those expected for their age. This is all the more remarkable because the targeted pupils have behavioural, social and emotional problems. One pupil said that playing the bells 'make me calm when I think I am getting angry about football at playtime'.

The school has baseline data and measures the intervention's impact over time on improving pastoral outcomes, and also improving academic success. This shows that the majority of pupils who take part regularly exceed expectations and make between two and three levels progress in the core subjects over key stage 2.⁸

The quality of teaching

- 39 Pupils' standards in all creative arts are highest where lessons are taught by good teachers who are also specialists in one of the creative arts. In the best lessons observed, confident and knowledgeable teachers demonstrate and expect high standards in their arts specialism. They know what pupils need to do next in order to improve, and they give pupils constructive, helpful feedback. These teachers make good use of well-planned activities which build on each other progressively and seamlessly. They intervene skilfully where pupils' progress slows, but are not afraid to allow sufficient time for pupils to develop and to consolidate their newly-acquired skills before moving on to the next activity. In these lessons, pupils are enabled to make appropriate decisions and to take risks without being afraid to make mistakes. This is particularly important in the creative arts where there is no single correct response to a challenge.
- 40 In good and excellent creative arts lessons, teachers take time to explain and to model the success criteria to pupils. For instance, they make sure that all pupils have a clear understanding of what makes a good composition or a successful dance sequence. They use resources particularly well to give pupils many inspirational examples of a particular form or genre. They teach skills and techniques specific to the art form and provide rehearsal opportunities, followed by well-planned and structured opportunities for pupils to experiment and develop their own imaginative interpretation of their learning. Finally, they support pupils to review and to evaluate their learning, and to reflect on the next steps they need to take.

Mixing reality and fantasy to create a magical world

Context

Ysgol-Y-Wern is a Welsh-medium primary school in Cardiff. There are 500 pupils on roll. About 5% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, and around 16% have additional learning needs. These proportions are below the national average.

Strategy

The school ensures that carefully planned cross-curricular activities provide excellent opportunities for all pupils to experience a wide range of art techniques and genres. Staff work closely with established and professional artists to develop their own understanding of art. Regular art and design workshops for pupils provide worthwhile

⁸ More details of the best practice identified at Christchurch (C.I.W.) Voluntary Aided School are available at <http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/docViewer/329347.2/music-therapy-helps-emotional-and-behavioural-development/?navmap=33,53,158>,

training for staff on using advanced materials such as wood, metal, and glass. This enables all staff to deliver a carefully co-ordinated curriculum so that whole year group projects develop art skills through other subjects, especially history and geography. Parents are invited to join all school visits. This successfully allows parents to appreciate and understand the educational value of the visits and allows them to support their children's learning effectively.

Action

Year 6 pupils studying 'Masters and Servants' visit Castell Coch to learn about Dafydd Bute and his master William Burgess.

Following their visit, pupils look at various paintings of Castell Coch, focusing on two Welsh artists, Rhiannon Roberts, and Jodie Welsh. They discuss the different approaches used by these artists and focus on tone and the quality of colour in the works. Pupils consider whether the colours were warm or cold, bright or dull, light or dim and pure. The teacher provides valuable opportunities for pupils to discuss how the artists achieve the colour tones used, by encouraging them to observe how light or dark the colours are. For example, the teacher uses a colour wheel effectively to explain that in order to lighten red, white may not be the best choice, as the resulting colour will be a shade of pink. Instead, pupils are encouraged to mix red with a light yellow in order to create a different 'hue', rather than produce a different colour completely. Pupils are consider how the artists place light or dark tones next to each other to create more complex, subtle and sophisticated paintings.

Collectively, pupils chose a character from one of the Aesop's fables. They use the techniques learnt in previous workshops to paint the lion from the story 'The Lion and the Mouse'. The teacher encourages them to consider the degree of lightness or darkness in their work, and successfully guides the pupils to tone colours 'up' and 'down' to make their completed paintings appear to be more solid or brighter.

Another particularly worthwhile project involves research into the journey of the river Taff. Carefully planned workshops with a local artist develop pupils' and staff awareness of different art techniques. Mapping skills as well as extended writing opportunities integrate with art activities to create an exciting and permanent art exhibition. This includes art as well as extended literacy works based on historical and geographical facts. The extensive historical research culminates in a creative mural of the river's journey, incorporating different elements of art techniques developed within the classes.

Outcomes

In both projects, nearly all pupils extend their depth of knowledge and understanding of aspects of the history of Wales. They explore weather, water, landforms, and nature, all through artwork. Focused workshops with successful artists develop pupils' ability to make sensible choices regarding the most suitable techniques available to them in art to present their work. They collaborate extensively with peers, teachers, and artists to develop their oracy skills. The teacher provides worthwhile opportunities for pupils to challenge and question each other's views and to pay close attention to what others say before responding appropriately.

The school regards creative arts as a powerful vehicle to narrow the gap between boys and girls attainment. This is supported by core data as standards of boys' oracy have improved in both Welsh and English over the past three years. This improvement is attributed to the engaging discussions pupils have during art activities. Through engaging in art activities, standards of behaviour are high as pupils develop into motivated, confident, and highly engaged individuals.

The school has a clear focus on ensuring that all displays around the school include opportunities to develop a wide range of art techniques across the curriculum. This includes all major whole school murals and wall paintings. For example, the school hall, named 'Neuadd Tir Na Nog' is a tribute to the work of Welsh author T.Llew Jones. His work is celebrated through the words of his work intertwined with pupils' paintings.

The headteacher firmly believes that every pupil leaving the school should leave a piece of art behind so that he or she becomes part of the design of the school. Many pupils enjoy opportunities to return to the school to view their work.

- 41 Where teaching is strongest, teachers have a clear, well-planned focus for pupils' learning. They make frequent use of demonstrations and modelling in the art form, but speak relatively infrequently. Where they give praise, it is often richly deserved. In good music and dance lessons, pupils often spend more time listening to music than teachers spend talking. In art and drama lessons, pupils observe and evaluate their peers' and teachers' work regularly, and spend only short periods of well-focused time listening to verbal explanations. The teacher has high expectations of all pupils to make good progress from their individual starting points. As a result, pupils are in no doubt that, as artists, they are expected to work hard, make progress and achieve their best.
- 42 Without exception in successful arts lessons, teachers convey to their pupils a passion and conviction for the creative arts. In schools where music, art and design, dance and drama are taught well, the arts are an integral and non-negotiable part of what happens in school. Classrooms are exciting, bright and vibrant learning areas. Teachers ensure that their lessons are creative and practical, and do not allow the arts to become marginalised within the demands of other school activities. As a result, pupils' learning experiences in many subjects are rich and powerful.
- 43 On the few occasions where lessons are less successful, this is often because teachers direct pupils' learning too much. In these cases, teachers lack the confidence to allow the pupils to experiment, to be creative and to make mistakes. They intervene too quickly, believing they can help pupils to get things right. In these lessons, teachers generally have a preconceived idea of a single finished product. They wrongly evaluate the success of learning on pupils' emulation of the teacher's model. There are many examples in the creative arts where pupils need to copy what a teacher does, for instance when learning how to use charcoal or watercolours in art or learning how to improve singing by using the correct breathing techniques. However, the most successful teachers interweave direct teaching of these skills with opportunities for pupils to use them imaginatively in their own way.

- 44 In a majority of music, drama and dance lessons, all pupils complete the same tasks. On a few occasions, more able pupils complete undemanding tasks easily, and less able pupils struggle to achieve success. However, where these lessons are most successful, the teacher skilfully challenges more able pupils to attain higher standards by asking more probing questions and demanding a deeper, more carefully delivered response. Equally, the teacher adapts the activity appropriately to enable less able pupils to achieve well from their starting points.
- 45 In many of the schools visited, teachers differentiate their planning for art and design according to their assessments of pupils' skills and prior attainment. Where the teacher takes good account of the skills pupils have already mastered, and plans challenging tasks accordingly, most pupils make good progress. However, in a minority of lessons, although teachers organise pupils into ability groups, they expect all groups to access a carousel of the same activities over a period of time. Too often in lessons organised in this way, more able pupils do not achieve as well as they could because the activities are not sufficiently challenging or demanding.

Matching poppies to pupils' abilities

Context

Llanidloes C.P. School is, near Newtown in Powys. There are 306 pupils on roll, and around 10% are eligible for free school meals. Around 11% have additional learning needs. Both proportions are below the national average.

Strategy

The school has a confident and knowledgeable specialist art co-ordinator, and a teaching assistant who is particularly skilled in teaching and modelling art and design. The school values art and design through the curriculum, through colourful exhibits of pupils' work around the school and through a wide range of extra-curricular art and design activities.

Action

In an art lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher and teaching assistant plan carefully differentiated tasks to match pupils' learning needs. These are based around the theme of the Second World War, and build on pupils' experiences of Remembrance Day and the poppies displayed at the Tower of London. The teacher takes good account of her assessments of what pupils can already do to identify the activities for the lesson. Lower ability pupils work with the teacher to develop their use of perspective. They paint poppies of different sizes carefully onto a previously completed background wash. Another group cut and layer tissue paper to create different shades of poppies, which they outline ready for display. A group use clay to create three-dimensional replicas of the London ceramic poppies. The teacher challenges them to find a way to ensure that the petals are the same thickness and all stick together. A group with well-developed pencil control skills use art pencils of different hardness to produce a detailed sketch of a poppy. They work silently in rapt concentration, using the sketching techniques they have previously been taught to produce detailed observational sketches of a very high standard. Finally, a group work with a skilled teaching assistant to replicate a small, pastel reproduction poppy on an enlarged grid, using proportion to make the enlargement entirely accurate.

Outcomes

All groups of pupils make good progress with their art and design skills because the level of challenge in the tasks is well matched to each group's starting points. As a result, pupils' standards are at and above the levels expected for their age. Pupils take pride in their art work, knowing that the best work will be displayed around the school and in "Oriol yr Ysgol" (the school's gallery).

- 46 There is no statutory requirement for teachers to assess pupils' standards in foundation subjects at key stage 2. However, in many schools, teachers assess pupils' achievement in the creative arts annually, against the National Curriculum level descriptors. Often these assessments are completed retrospectively as a record of pupils' achievements. Although specialist teachers often assess pupils' achievements correctly against the National Curriculum level descriptors, often non-specialist classroom teachers lack the expert knowledge to be able to pinpoint assessment in music and art and design accurately. In a few schools, teachers assess pupils' progress regularly through the school year against specific and progressive statements of achievement. Leaders support teachers to moderate their assessments and identify where progress slows or accelerates. Pupils make better progress where teachers use assessment for learning effectively to inform the next steps to improve pupils' skills. In a few schools, parents also have access to video evidence celebrating their child's achievements in the creative arts.
- 47 In many of the best lessons observed and in the most effective schemes of work scrutinised, there are strong links to the artistic culture of Wales. In many schools, well-planned schemes of work draw on Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig to make relevant links to the history and geography of the school's location, providing a context for Welsh art, music, dance and drama. Successful teachers actively exploit the rich and diverse local resources, for example in using the work of inspirational Welsh artists and musicians as models for pupils to learn from.

Using a school gallery to support pupils' learning through first-hand experience

Context

Puncheston CP School is a rural Welsh-medium primary school in Pembrokeshire. There are 70 pupils on roll. About 9% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is significantly lower than the national average. Around 28% of pupils have additional learning needs, which is higher than the national average. Around 29% of the pupils speak Welsh as their home language.

Strategy

The school owns an impressive collection of over 200 original works of art. The previous headteacher, Alun Ifans, built up the collection. These works have been donated to the school by Welsh artists, including David Tress, Stan Rosenthal, James Mackeown and Kyffin Williams. The works are used to support powerful teaching in art and design lessons, and as stimuli and inspiration for creative cross-curricular lessons. The school was formerly led by Waldo Williams, the Welsh poet. A selection of his original work and memorabilia are housed in the school's entrance foyer.

Action

Teachers plan to develop pupils' art skills progressively. They ensure that pupils have a good understanding of different techniques, for example using pastels, watercolours and charcoal effectively. They also make imaginative use of the many original works of art to model to pupils how different Welsh artists present their work. For example, pupils studied the topic of the weather over a term. They focus on the specific techniques used by the painter David Tress, such as responding to real objects in an abstract way, combining impasto⁹ with collage, and using colours dramatically. Teachers support pupils' understanding by using an original work by David Tress, from the school gallery. Pupils consider the colours, texture and atmosphere created by particular paintings, before assimilating the ideas to create their own original work. In addition, teachers challenge pupils to work across different art forms, for example to respond to a work of art and present their response as dance. Teachers and teaching assistants model different artistic media and techniques confidently and competently.

Outcomes

Pupils achieve good standards across a breadth of art forms, and are able to transfer their artistic understanding across the different art forms successfully. Nearly all pupils show a rich respect and reverence for the art and culture of Wales, displayed in their school. They have a clear understanding of their own cultural identity. They speak knowledgeably and fondly about familiar artists, their styles and techniques.

Extra-curricular provision

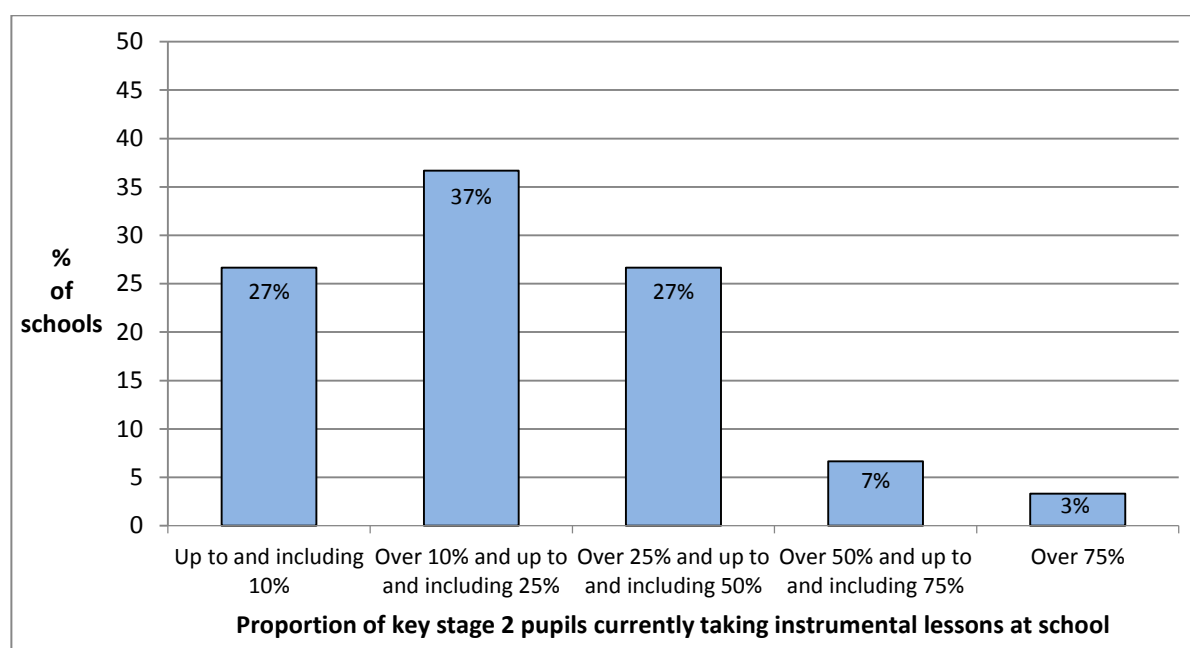
- 48 All schools visited or responding to the questionnaire for the survey report say that they take part in festivals and competitions to celebrate the creative arts. Most schools celebrate St David's day with an Eisteddfod. Pupils say that they very much enjoy the Eisteddfod, and relish the opportunity to compete and participate with their peers in many arts performances and exhibitions. Their participation clearly has a positive effect on their well-being and engagement in the creative arts.
- 49 Most Welsh-medium schools (and a minority of English medium schools) surveyed and visited take an active part in the creative arts activities within the annual Urdd competition. Most of this provision takes place outside the whole-school curriculum, for example through additional classes and extra-curricular activities. In many schools, this additional provision is provided by parents and outside providers and is directed at specifically talented pupils, who achieve very high standards in the performance of their art form. However, in a minority of schools, competitive Urdd activities, for which pupils are selected, take precedence. As a result, pupils who are not selected for inclusion may miss out on rich extra-curricular activities for part of the school year.
- 50 All of the schools surveyed or visited offer instrumental tuition in one or more

⁹ Impasto is a painting technique, where paint is applied very thickly, so that the brush or painting-knife strokes are visible.

instruments. Many schools offer tuition in several instruments. In a few schools, leaders identified that they would prefer to offer tuition in other instruments, but were unable to secure this provision.

Instrument	% of schools offering tuition
Violin	69%
Trumpet/cornet	56%
Recorder	53%
Guitar	53%
Drums	47%
Flute	47%
Clarinet	44%
Cello	34%
Piano/keyboard	28%
Other brass	28%
Harp	6%

- 51 The table above appears to present a generally positive picture, but in reality too few pupils are taking up musical instruments and, in more than a quarter of schools surveyed, only a very few pupils (less than 10%) have instrumental lessons.



- 52 In most schools, pupils say that they learn a musical instrument because it is fun. This is particularly the case when the instrumental tutor has a claim to fame, for example appearing in bands or on television. More astute pupils say that, although it is easy and enjoyable to begin learning an instrument, it is hard work to become proficient, and for this reason many of their friends only learn for a short period of time. Generally, pupils say that it is easier to learn an instrument in schools where you can learn with your friends, for example where there is a school orchestra or band to support the learner, than on your own. In a very few schools, pupils say that they only learn a musical instrument in order to take part in competitions.

- 53 Nearly all schools visited or responding to the survey offer after-school or lunchtime clubs and activities in the creative arts.

Club or activity	% of schools
Choir	84%
Arts and crafts	59%
Digital media/ICT	50%
Orchestra/band	38%
Drama	31%
Dance (any type except folk dance)	31%
Recorders	28%
Welsh folk dance	16%
Creative writing or poetry	13%

- 54 In many schools, these extra-curricular activities are run voluntarily by teachers. In a very few schools, teaching assistants also run clubs and activities. A few schools say that the number of extra-curricular clubs with a creative focus has declined recently, due to increasing demands on teacher time.

Singing in the choir

Context

Ysgol Twm o'r Nant is a Welsh-medium primary school in Denbighshire. There are 281 pupils on roll. About 8% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, and 19% of pupils have additional learning needs. These proportions are well below the national average. A majority of the pupils speak Welsh as a first language at home.

Strategy

The school has a long established tradition of high-quality provision for the creative arts and the Urdd. The leaders' vision is to provide every pupil with the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts within and beyond the curriculum, while at the school. The school seeks opportunities for pupils to enjoy first-hand the culture of Wales, through partnerships with local artists and performers.

Action

The after-school choir is a social event for up to 100 pupils. Several members of staff support the choir and work with groups of pupils to develop their skills in singing. Many pupils say that they look forward to attending the choir once they are old enough. The choir has status within the school and their achievements are celebrated publically. They often have famous Welsh visitors to help them with their singing, for example the singer-songwriters Dafydd Iwan and Caryl Parry Jones, and the harpist Dylan Cernyw.

Impact

The pupils clearly enjoy learning and singing a wide range of songs, both within school and beyond. They have a good knowledge of popular and current Welsh singers, musicians and songwriters, which contributes to their well-developed sense of cultural identity.

- 55 Many schools surveyed include visits to cultural events and also receive visits from arts and heritage organisations.

Take pupils out of school to visit:		Receive visits in school from:	
Heritage site (eg castle)	75%	Dance/drama companies	69%
Theatre	72%	Writers	56%
Museums	59%	Musicians	50%
Concert/musical event	44%	Visual artists (eg painters, sculptors)	38%
Art gallery	19%	Heritage organisations	16%
		Film clubs	13%

- 56 Leaders were asked to identify whether they believe that different arts and cultural visits and visitors have a positive impact on teaching and learning. Many schools say that the effectiveness of a visit depends on the depth of preparation and follow-up work that the pupils complete. Many leaders comment that visits which are thoroughly planned and embedded in the school's curriculum make the greatest contribution to pupil progress. They report that occasional or one-off visits and visitors, although usually highly enjoyable, generally make a limited contribution to planned learning and skills progression.
- 57 Leaders in Welsh-medium schools identify a shortage of Welsh-medium arts partnerships of high quality to draw upon, particularly in theatre and drama.

Leadership and management**Leaders' vision**

- 58 Without exception, in the best practice schools visited, senior leaders share with staff, pupils and parents an inspiring, all-inclusive vision for the creative arts and their importance in a pupils' education. They express the conviction that the creative arts contribute to improving social, educational and economic outcomes for young people. They provide examples of how the creative arts help to develop former pupils into well-educated, rounded people, who make a positive contribution to society.
- 59 These leaders acknowledge the central position of reading, writing and mathematics in their school. In the best practice, leaders find ways to ensure that the creative arts enhance pupils' achievements in literacy and numeracy, for example by providing experiences to talk and write about. Leaders say that where teachers make good use of a progression of planned skills, and deliver exciting creative arts lessons

imaginatively, pupils' achievements in other subjects improve. Many leaders find innovative ways to address and to confront the tensions between accountability in improving pupil outcomes, for example in literacy and numeracy, and maintaining and enhancing the position of creative arts within their schools. In these schools, all pupils receive a broad, engaging curriculum that includes a suitable allocation of time and resources for the development of the creative arts.

- 60 Innovative leaders use opportunities in the arts particularly well to develop and to improve pupils' wellbeing. They gather evidence to show that the creative arts contribute significantly to developing pupils' self-esteem, improving attendance and behaviour, and promoting an inclusive, tolerant culture and a rich sense of community. They use the evidence well to ensure that leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, pay good attention to delivering the arts successfully. For example, in a minority of schools, leaders analyse a wide range of pastoral assessment well. They compare the results for different groups of pupils. They use aspects of the data to create baselines before starting creative arts interventions and projects. On occasions, these activities are funded by grants, for instance the pupil deprivation grant, targeted at pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable to underachievement. The activities may be within the curriculum, or run as after-school activities. Once the project or performance is complete, leaders use the same assessments again to measure the impact of the activity. They evaluate its success carefully and use their evaluations to prioritise further well-chosen activities.
- 61 In many best practice schools, teachers and leaders select creative arts experiences for pupils who they know may benefit from being the centre of attention for the right reasons. Where appropriate, they provide targeted pupils with suitable 'concert' uniform and support them to learn words, parts and actions. They support parents and carers to take the pupil to and from rehearsals and performances. They celebrate the pupils' success openly, and subsequently remind them of the results of their hard work and perseverance when they experience difficulties in other areas. These leaders believe that if schools do not provide pupils with worthwhile artistic opportunities, they may never have opportunities later in life to participate and succeed in the arts or in other areas of their lives.
- 62 In many of the best practice schools visited and in the schools surveyed, leaders and managers are open about the importance of including all pupils in the provision for creative arts. Most of these schools provide well-planned opportunities for all pupils to take part in performances, festivals and the full breadth of the arts curriculum, particularly those with additional learning needs and those who are more able. Leaders guide more able pupils to develop different, creative ways of thinking and working. They teach them to deal with the frustrations associated with problems where there is no single correct answer. They use creative arts experiences to enrich learning for able pupils in challenging, innovative ways, for example by striving for work of very high quality through intense rehearsal where attention is paid to every detail. Inspirational leaders similarly target those pupils who struggle academically but develop a talent in a creative art, encourage them to strive for high standards, and build their aspirations and self-esteem.

Subject leaders for the arts

- 63 In many of the best practice schools visited, the leader with overall responsibility for the creative arts is either the headteacher or a senior member of staff. For example, in one large school, the three senior leaders each take responsibility for either literacy, numeracy or the creative arts. They support the non-teaching headteacher and deputy headteacher to form the senior leadership team. This communicates effectively to parents, pupils and governors that the creative arts are as important as literacy and numeracy. In a few schools, a less experienced but talented teacher leads their arts subject by example across the school. Headteachers often support these leaders effectively, acknowledging and developing their strengths and leadership skills. Nevertheless, where the creative arts leader is also a senior manager, the school more often includes well-planned and evaluated creative arts initiatives within its improvement strategies.
- 64 Although in many schools, subject leaders monitor the school's provision appropriately, very few leaders actively monitor standards in the creative arts. Where leaders observe lessons in the creative arts, these are often completed as peer observations. Teachers do not view these observations as having the same importance or weight as, for example, performance management observations. Where leaders complete written summaries of creative arts lessons, too often they focus on pupils' engagement and enjoyment in a breadth of activities, rather than the impact of teaching and other provision on improving pupil's skills and standards progressively in the creative arts. This is often because leaders feel under pressure from advisers to focus their monitoring of standards on the core subjects, especially literacy and numeracy.
- 65 Subject leaders often produce useful annual reports on music and art and design in their school. These are normally based on their monitoring of provision, for example the scrutiny of teachers' planning, talking to pupils and occasional peer observations. In a few schools, subject reports for physical education include standards and provision in dance, and for drama within English. In the best examples, subject leaders report accurately on the standards pupils achieve and the progress they make. Subject leader reports usually inform senior leaders, headteachers and governors about standards and provision in the school. In a minority of schools, the findings are included in school self-evaluation reports, although this is not consistently the case.
- 66 In a few schools visited, senior leaders with overall responsibility for the creative arts devise action plans that include priorities in dance, drama, music, art and design, and they often include digital media, poetry and creative writing (in either English or Welsh). These plans are usually detailed, robust and carefully costed. Leaders assign tasks and resources appropriately to staff. They often monitor and evaluate these action plans well, and the actions make a positive contribution to whole-school improvement. In part, the improvements occur because senior leaders drive the priorities at a strategic level. However, the improvements also stem from the commitment shown by all staff towards making the creative arts an all-inclusive part of the school's provision. As a result, all staff share a vision and ethos for the school that gives a high status to the creative arts.

- 67 Many music and art and design subject leaders devise action plans for their subjects. However, too often these do not have sharp, measureable success criteria, and the actions identified are not specific or precise enough to bring about improvements. In a very few schools, subject leaders identify improvement priorities for drama through their English action plans, or dance through their physical education action plans. Often schools allocate a significant amount of their annual budget to the creative arts, for example when funding music tuition or purchasing resources for art and design. However, not all leaders monitor or evaluate the plans to use this funding carefully enough to know whether the budget is spent effectively. Very few subject leaders routinely evaluate the success of previous action plans. As a result, the plans make a limited contribution to whole-school improvement.
- 68 In many best practice schools, subject leaders have created comprehensive schemes of work for art and music, dance within physical education and drama within oracy or literacy. Often these include detailed guidance for non-specialist teachers and a digital bank of audio-visual resources. In the best examples, the schemes are progressive and include examples of carefully differentiated activities to support teachers in planning for different pupils' needs. They include well-chosen partnerships, trips and visits to enhance pupils' learning. They link well with the thematic curriculum and provide well-chosen opportunities for discrete learning, of subject-specific skills. However, in a minority of cases, the schemes focus exclusively on ensuring a broad range of experiences at the expense of progression in developing specific skills, knowledge and understanding in the creative arts.
- 69 Teachers in most schools report to parents on pupils' progress in the creative arts at least annually, but there is not much regular and robust assessment of standards. As a result, leaders are often not well placed to analyse or use the outcomes of teacher assessment to improve pupils' standards. Leaders often have anecdotal evidence of where progress and standards in creative arts subjects may be good but this is not often reflected in formal assessments.
- 70 In a majority of the schools visited, teachers do not moderate their non-statutory assessments of what pupils can do to ensure that it is accurate and consistent across the school. Many teachers, particularly those who lack confidence in teaching the creative arts, say that they are unsure about the accuracy of their assessments. The Welsh Government has provided detailed guidance to support schools in assessing pupils' achievement in music and in art and design, but very few schools direct staff to refer to the materials that exemplify standards at different National Curriculum levels. Only a few leaders have provided teachers with training in how to assess pupils' achievements, or with exemplification of the standards they expect pupils to achieve. In the best examples, teachers and leaders moderate and scrutinise detailed on-going formative assessments of pupils' achievements, which are supported by wide-ranging evidence of what pupils can do, often recorded digitally. In these schools, teachers use assessments to establish the right starting points in lessons for groups of pupils, who consequently make good progress. Leaders use their overview of pupils' progress to inform and improve the provision across the school.

Blodeuwedd¹⁰

Context

Ysgol Cynwyd Sant is a Welsh-medium school in Maesteg in Bridgend. There are 301 pupils on roll. Approximately 10% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is much lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils identified with additional learning needs is slightly below the average for Wales.

Strategy

Teachers ensure that the creative and dramatic arts are well represented across the curriculum. Reading and writing are purposeful because pupils have plentiful, well-chosen opportunities to perform their work to an audience. The school makes effective use of technologies, such as interactive voting, so that pupils can assess each other's work quickly against the success criteria. This strategy ensures that all pupils are fully involved in assessment and contribute well to the discussion about how to improve their own work and the work of other pupils.

Action

A Year 5 and 6 class study the story of Blodeuwedd. During the week, the pupils work in four groups to rewrite the story as a play script. They practise their roles, write songs and choose the costumes, ready for an end-of-week production.

At the start of the performance lesson, the class teacher discusses the important aspects of the production to ensure that all pupils understand that they need to include dramatic elements, such as pace, emotion and dynamics, in their individual performances.

All the groups disperse around the school to practise their performance before filming the final version on an electronic tablet. Two groups work independently and the other two groups work with the teacher and the learning support assistant. They all record their production as video clips successfully. At the end of the session, the pupils return to class to evaluate each other's work. They use an electronic voting application to assess and to rate the performance skills of each group in turn.

Outcome

This successful performance session built on a week of preparation of the script, writing songs and developing characterisation. The teacher adapted the tasks and groups well to meet the various needs and abilities of the pupils and to ensure that each group completed their tasks effectively within the allotted time. All groups successfully recorded their performances and gave constructive feedback to help their peers to improve their work. They understood the criteria their teachers used to assess pupils' performance and knew what they need to do next in order to improve their work in drama.

¹⁰ Blodeuwedd - is a woman made from flowers by Math. Her story is part of the fourth branch of the Mabinogi, the tale of Math son of Mathonwy.

Recruitment and deployment of staff

- 71 Standards observed during the best practice visits are highest where schools deploy staff well. Where they have identified gaps in staff expertise, many have found ways to engage additional staff with the specialist skills needed. In the majority of cases, this is the result of links with local authority services. Around half of schools deploy adults with skills in the creative arts to cover teachers' planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time. In a few schools, creative art lessons used to be delivered by part-time specialist practitioners, but this has been stopped due to financial pressures. These lessons are now generally taught by non-specialist classroom teachers, who do not always have the subject knowledge and confidence to teach the creative arts to a high standard.
- 72 In a few English-medium schools visited, the creative arts post-holder has recently retired and the school has been unable to appoint a successor with similar curriculum strengths in the creative arts. This is despite advertising for the ability to contribute to the school's vibrant culture of performing arts. In these schools, the creative arts continue to benefit from the legacy of the previous post holder, but leaders express concerns about the future of the creative arts if they cannot recruit a suitably competent subject leader. In many other English-medium schools, headteachers say that they are worried about succession planning for the creative arts because too few teachers joining the profession have the knowledge and expertise to lead the creative arts.
- 73 By contrast, none of the Welsh-medium best practice schools visited had experienced problems in recruiting teachers able to lead and promote the creative arts. For example, a medium-sized Welsh-medium primary school recently received 15 highly eligible applications for a classroom teaching position as a music specialist. Often in these schools, nearly every teacher and teaching assistant is confident to model and to lead the creative arts. Many Welsh-medium teachers say that they gained confidence and expertise in performing through the Urdd when at school and that they want to share this with the next generation of pupils. This helps to promote a strong sense of cultural identity.

Funding, training and partnerships

- 74 Around half of the schools responding to the survey or visited do not charge pupils for taking part in creative arts activities. A minority of schools waive or reduce charges for pupils from poorer families, although they expect other parents to pay. A few schools say that they expect all pupils to contribute towards creative arts activities, regardless of their backgrounds, although many allow staggered payments. In a few schools, leaders seek out grants which they use to fund initiatives in the creative arts. Many schools provide free transport for participating pupils and their families, for example to attend carol services and festivals. A minority of schools make valid use of their pupil deprivation grant to ensure that pupils who are eligible for free school meals have equal opportunities to access the creative arts. The Welsh Government has recently published helpful guidance to help schools to make good use of the pupil deprivation grant for arts and cultural activities¹¹.

¹¹ English: <http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/browse-all/pdg-in-support-of-arts/?lang=en>
Welsh: <http://learning.wales.gov.uk/resources/browse-all/pdg-in-support-of-arts/?lang=cy>

- 75 The cost of instrumental lessons varies across the schools visited. Around half of schools do not charge any pupil for instrumental lessons. The school allocates money from its budget and, on occasions, uses its pupil deprivation grant money to support instrumental lessons for pupils who are eligible for free school meals. One school does not charge for the first year of tuition, but asks parents of pupils who are not eligible for free school meals to buy their own instrument after this time, as an indication of their commitment to learning. Many schools subsidise the cost of instrumental lessons. Nevertheless, in a very few schools, parents pay in excess of £100 a term for their child to learn to play an instrument. Although many schools monitor the take-up of instrumental lessons by pupils eligible for free school meals carefully, and work to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to learn, this is not always the case.

Using musical instrument tuition in the Foundation Phase to inspire more pupils to learn an instrument in key stage 2

Context

Llanyrafon Primary School is an English-medium primary school in Torfaen, with 370 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is around 5%, which is well below the national average. Around 35% of pupils have additional learning needs, which is much higher than the average.

Strategy

Leaders at Llanyrafon Primary School are mindful of the unfairness of providing musical instrument tuition for some pupils and not for others. As a result, they have taken action to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument during their time at the school, in providing violin lessons for a year during the Foundation Phase.

Action

All pupils learn the violin during the reception year. These weekly instrumental lessons are led by members of the local authority music service. The cost of the lessons is met by the school from their budget, and parents are not asked to contribute. When pupils enter key stage 2, they have the opportunity to learn a number of musical instruments. The school asks for a parental contribution of £30 a term towards the cost of these lessons, and makes up the rest of the cost from the school budget.

Outcomes

Teachers in the Foundation Phase identify many improved outcomes as a result of the project, including improvements to pupils' wellbeing (engagement, confidence, self-esteem, concentration) and musical ability (singing and rhythm work, early notation reading). These improved outcomes are sustained beyond the instrumental lessons.

Since starting the strings project for reception pupils in 2009-2010, the number of pupils learning instruments in key stage 2 has increased by around 40%. Currently 34% of key stage 2 (74 pupils) learn a variety of musical instruments in school time.

- 76 In the schools visited, very few teachers had attended any training in the creative arts recently. Many headteachers are frustrated with the limited availability of affordable training opportunities for teachers in the creative arts. Leaders at all levels say that the lack of training prevents them from improving standards in their school in the creative arts.
- 77 Many of the schools visited partnership work in creative arts provide opportunities for teachers to develop their own professional knowledge and skills. On the few occasions where teachers and teaching assistants have accessed recent training, they are able to identify the clear impact of their training in improving outcomes for pupils in creative arts and other subjects, for example in improved standards in oracy.
- 78 In many schools visited and in the survey responses, positive partnership opportunities with secondary schools support and encourage the creative arts. In a few schools, secondary specialist teachers share their skills by teaching older pupils for a small number of lessons. However, in a minority of schools, particularly where the perception is that the creative arts are not a priority in the secondary school, this partnership has a limited impact on promoting participation and engagement in the creative arts.
- 79 In a very few cases, best practice schools support other schools by hosting model lessons and holding cluster meetings to discuss the creative arts. In a few schools, teachers have worked together across the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 in order to improve provision in the creative arts.

Working collaboratively to share good practice

Context

Llangewydd Junior School is an English-medium school, near Bridgend. There are 315 pupils on roll aged between seven and 11. About 29% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average. About 31% of pupils have additional learning needs, which is also above the national average.

Strategy

At Llangewydd Junior School, leaders value the arts as an integral part of school life. The school has appointed a good number of well-qualified creative arts teachers, especially for music. Leaders appoint staff with good generic teaching skills, knowledge and expertise. In addition, the headteacher actively seeks staff who will 'buy in' to the promotion and development of the creative arts. For example, a teacher voluntarily organises an after-school art café, where parents and their children can engage in art activities. Pupils value the experience of taking part in the annual Eisteddfod because they say that it enhances their creative arts skills, self-confidence and self-esteem.

Action

Teachers link with the feeder infant school to deliver music and art and design lessons collaboratively. The school has devised cross-phase moderation portfolios between the two schools to inform staff about standards in the creative arts. The lead

practitioner works with other local schools to share best practice and to support the development of creative arts provision in neighbouring schools.

Outcomes

Working together across the Foundation Phase and key stage 2 has enabled staff to develop awareness of standards expected and to agree what constitutes the expected progress in the arts. As a result, teacher assessment is valid and accurate, and is used well to inform the next steps in pupils' learning and the school's provision. Sharing best practice with other local schools encourages the schools to reflect honestly and constructively on their own practice.

Appendix 1: Evidence base

Evidence base

The findings and recommendations in this report draw on visits to 20 primary schools. The schools selected for visits had been identified as having strong practice in the creative arts as a result of Estyn inspections or through their involvement in a range of national creative arts projects. The sample takes account of geographical location, socio-economic background, size of school and linguistic contexts. In these visits, inspectors:

- observed creative arts lessons at key stage 2
- reviewed curriculum plans and documentation
- met representative groups of pupils
- held discussions with middle and senior leaders

In addition, Estyn invited 150 primary schools to respond to an online survey about their provision for the creative arts at key stage 2. The schools selected for this sample included a random sample which took account of geographical location, socio-economic background, size of school and linguistic contexts. Thirty-two schools (about 21%) provided responses to the online survey.

List of schools visited

Christchurch (Church in Wales) Voluntary Aided Primary School, Swansea
Fenton Primary School, Pembrokeshire
Hafren Junior School, Powys
Llangwydd Junior School, Bridgend
Llanidloes Primary School, Powys
Llanyrafon Primary School, Torfaen
Milford Haven Junior School, Pembrokeshire
Pillgwenlly Primary School, Newport
Puncheston CP School, Pembrokeshire
Rumney Primary School, Cardiff
Tywyn Primary School, Neath Port Talbot
Ynystawe Primary School, Swansea
Ysgol Cynwyd Sant, Bridgend
Ysgol Eifion Wyn, Gwynedd
Ysgol Glancegin, Gwynedd
Ysgol Glanwydden, Conwy
Ysgol Iolo Morgannwg, Vale of Glamorgan
Ysgol Treganna, Cardiff
Ysgol Twn o'r Nant, Denbighshire
Ysgol-Y-Wern, Cardiff

Glossary/references

Cerdd Dant	Cerdd Dant is a unique Welsh tradition of singing lyrics over a harp accompaniment. Cerdd Dant has strict rules about metre, rhyme, and acceleration. A harp plays the melody while the vocalist improvises their own harmony while singing a poem. When written down, the melody is known as a 'gosodiad'.
Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig	Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is a part of the curriculum that is unique to Wales. It is designed to reflect the history, geography and culture of Wales and the school's locality. Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig is intended to develop pupils' sense of cultural identity, place and heritage.
Eisteddfod	Any of a number of annual festivals in Wales, especially the Royal National Eisteddfod held annually in August, in which competitions are held in music, poetry, drama, and the fine arts. Schools often hold their own Eisteddfod, normally on or around St David's Day.
Foundation Phase	The Foundation Phase is an approach to learning for children from 3 to 7 years of age in Wales. It is the statutory curriculum for all children in Wales between these ages in both maintained and non-maintained settings.
National Literacy and numeracy Framework (LNF)	This is a skills framework developed by Welsh Government. It became statutory in schools from September 2013 and includes statutory assessment against the framework from 2014. It is designed to help teachers embed literacy and numeracy into all subjects for learners aged 5 to 14.
Urdd Gobaith Cymru (Urdd)	A Welsh-medium youth movement organising competitive arts and sports events for younger participants, similar to an eisteddfod. Established in 1922, the Urdd aims to give children and young people the opportunity to learn and socialise in the Welsh language.

Explanation of words and phrases used to describe our evaluations

The words and phrases used in the left-hand column below are those that we use to describe our evaluations. The right-hand column explains the broad proportions that relate to the relevant terms.

nearly all	with very few exceptions
Most	90% or more
Many	70% or more
A majority	over 60%
Half or around a half	close to 50%
A minority	below 40%
Few	below 20%
Very few	less than 10%

The remit author and survey team

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